

Amendments In the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-5 and 9. Please amend Claims 6, 7, 10 and 18 as follows:

1-5. **Canceled.**

6. **(Currently Amended)** The frame structure of claim 7 ~~[[5]]~~, wherein said sub-channel bitmap comprises:

a bit corresponding to an operational state of said sub-channel.

7. **(Currently Amended)** ~~A~~ **The frame structure of claim 5, wherein said super-channel information further comprises comprising:**
super-channel information, wherein

said super-channel information comprises

information regarding a super-channel,

a super-channel identifier wherein said super-channel

identifier identifies said super-channel,

a sub-channel bitmap, wherein each bit in said sub-channel

bitmap represents an operational state of a

corresponding sub-channel, and

error condition flags, wherein said error condition flags include a

forced/manual switch flag, **and**

said super-channel comprises a plurality of sub-channels linking a

first and second network element; and

sub-channel information, wherein

said sub-channel information comprises a sub-channel identifier, and

said sub-channel identifier identifies a sub-channel.

8. **(Original)** The frame structure of claim 7, wherein said error condition flags further include a bit-error-rate flag, a loss-of-signal flag and a loss-of-frame flag.

9. Canceled.

10. (Currently Amended) A ~~The frame structure of claim 9, wherein comprising:~~

super-channel information, wherein

said super-channel information comprises

information regarding a super-channel,

a super-channel identifier wherein said super-channel

identifier identifies said super-channel, and

~~said super-channel information further comprises~~ primary
enable information, and

said super-channel comprises a plurality of sub-channels linking a
first and second network element;

sub-channel information, wherein

said sub-channel information comprises a sub-channel identifier, and

said sub-channel identifier identifies a sub-channel; and

alternate super-channel information, wherein

said super-channel information comprises

an alternate super-channel identifier, and

~~said alternate super-channel information further comprises~~
alternate enable information, and

said alternate super-channel identifier identifies an alternate super-
channel.

11. (Original) The frame structure of claim 10, wherein
primary enable information is configured to indicate if said super-channel is
operational, and
alternate enable information is configured to indicate if said alternate super-
channel is operational.

12. (Original) The frame structure of claim 10, wherein primary enable information comprises primary LSP enable flags, and alternate enable information comprises alternate LSP enable flags.
13. (Original) The frame structure of claim 12, wherein said primary LSP enable flags and said alternate LSP enable flags are configured to indicate which of said super-channel and said alternate super-channel should carry an LSP.
14. (Original) The frame structure of claim 13, wherein said primary LSP enable flags are configured to indicate if an LSP should be carried by said super-channel, and said alternate LSP enable flags are configured to indicate if said LSP should be carried by said alternate super-channel.
15. (Original) The frame structure of claim 10, wherein said super-channel information comprises:
a sub-channel bitmap, wherein each bit in said sub-channel bitmap represents an operational state of a corresponding sub-channel.
16. (Original) The frame structure of claim 15, wherein said sub-channel bitmap comprises:
a bit corresponding to an operational state of said sub-channel.
17. (Original) The frame structure of claim 15, wherein said super-channel information further comprises:
error condition flags, wherein said error condition flags include a forced/manual switch flag.

18. **(Currently Amended)** The frame structure of claim 7 ~~[[4]]~~, further comprising:

sub-channel state information, wherein said sub-channel state information conveys a state of said sub-channel.

19. (Original) The frame structure of claim 18, wherein said sub-channel state information conveys a state of a connection between a far-end transmitter and a near-end receiver over said sub-channel.